

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to create a calculation formula data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~-template, the calculation formula data field showing a formula used for calculating data displayed on the customized ~~created~~-template.

3. (previously amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein generating a plurality of reports further comprises:

performing at least one mathematical computation using the business metrics stored in the database, the computations are performed by the server and include at least one of summing, averaging, time weight averaging; and

generating a trend analysis based on the business metrics stored within the database by prompting a user to select the business units to be included within the trend analysis and a type of measure to be analyzed.

4. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to assign a definition to each data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~-template.

5. (previously amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to create a data field for validating a business metric entered into the created template.

6. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to create a drop-down box for entering a business metric into the customized ~~created~~-template, the drop-down box having a plurality of data selection created by the first user to be selected by the second user when entering business metrics.

7. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to link a metric target with a data field displayed on the customized created template.

8. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein ~~prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to link at least one of a level and a weight to a data field displayed on the created template~~ the level indicates higher or lower desirable features or ratings.

9. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to create at least one field category and an order for displaying the at least one field category on the customized created template.

10. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to change a data field displayed on the customized created template.

11. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to modify a definition assigned to a data field displayed on the customized created template.

12. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein prompting a first user to create a customized template further comprises prompting the first user to modify the customized created template by changing an order of appearance of the data fields displayed on the customized created template.

13. (previously amended) The method according to Claim 39 wherein creating at least one hierarchy of entities within the business entity further comprises changing the at least one hierarchy of entities within the business entity by prompting the first user to add or remove at least one business unit from the at least one hierarchy of entities.

14.-38. (canceled)

39. (currently amended) A method for managing business metrics for a business entity using a server system coupled to a database and at least one client system, the business entity having a plurality of business units, said method comprising the steps of:

storing in the database a plurality of web pages including a create template web page;

prompting a first user to create a customized template for receiving business metrics by displaying at the at least one client system the create template web page, the create template web page prompts the first user to enter data including at least one of a template name, a frequency, a first due date, a contact name, and a template description, the create template web page prompts the first user to define ~~designate a number of~~ data fields to be displayed on the ~~created~~ customized template and a type of business metrics to be entered into the ~~created~~ customized template, the customized ~~created~~ template is stored within the database for retrieval by a second user for inputting business metrics;

prompting the first user to link at least one of a level and a weight to a data field displayed on the customized template;

creating at least one hierarchy of entities within the business entity including storing within the database a relationship between each of the business units included within the business entity;

linking the ~~created~~ customized template to the at least one hierarchy of entities for restricting access to the customized ~~created~~ template to only selected business units included within the business entity;

linking ~~selected~~ the data fields included within the customized ~~created~~ template to the at least one hierarchy of entities for combining data for a plurality of selected business units included within the business entity;

displaying the customized ~~created~~ template at the at least one client system to prompt the second user to enter business metrics relating a business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template, the second user enters business metrics into the data fields displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template;

storing the business metrics in the database;

analyzing the business metrics stored in the database using the server system for
generating reports including the business metrics; and

generating, using the server, a plurality of reports including a first report showing business metrics for each business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template including each business unit having entered data and the hierarchical relationship between each business unit, and a second report containing desired combinations of ~~combining~~ business metrics entered into linked data fields for each business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template based on the hierarchy of entities.

40. (currently amended) A network-based system for managing business metrics for a business entity, the business entity having a plurality of business units, said system comprising:

a client system comprising a browser;

a centralized database for storing information; and

a server system configured to be coupled to said client system and said database, said server further configured to:

store in the database a plurality of web pages including a create template web page;

prompt a first user to create a customized template for receiving business metrics by displaying at the client system the create template web page, the create template web page prompts the first user to enter data including at least one of a template name, a frequency, a first due date, a contact name, and a template description, the create template web page prompts the first user to define ~~designate a number of~~ data fields to be displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template and a type of business metrics to be entered into the customized ~~created~~ template, the customized ~~created~~ template is stored within the database for retrieval by a second user for inputting business metrics;

prompt the first user to link at least one of a level and a weight to a data field
displayed on the customized template;

record at least one hierarchy of entities within the business entity including storing within the database a relationship between each of the business units included within the business entity;

link the customized ~~created~~ template to the at least one hierarchy of entities for restricting access to the customized ~~created~~ template to only selected business units included within the business entity;

link the ~~selected~~ data fields included within the customized ~~created~~ template to the at least one hierarchy of entities for combining data for a plurality of selected business units included within the business entity;

display the customized ~~created~~ template at the client system to prompt the second user to enter business metrics relating a business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template, the second user enters business metrics into the data fields displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template;

store the business metrics in the database;

analyze the business metrics stored in the database for generating reports including the business metrics; and

generate a plurality of reports including a first report showing business metrics for each business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template including each business unit having entered data and the hierarchical relationship between each business unit, and a second report containing desired combinations of combining business metrics entered into linked data fields for each business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template based on the hierarchy of entities.

41. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to create a calculation formula data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template, the calculation formula data field showing a formula used for calculating data displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template.

42. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to:

perform at least one mathematical computation using the business metrics stored in the database, the computations performed include at least one of summing, averaging, time weight averaging; and

generate a trend analysis based on the business metrics stored within the database by prompting a user to select the business units to be included within the trend analysis and a type of measure to be analyzed.

43. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to assign a definition to each data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template.

44. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to create a data field for validating a business metric entered into the customized ~~created~~ template.

45. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to create a drop-down box for entering a business metric into the customized ~~created~~ template, the drop-down box having a plurality of data selection created by the first user to be selected by the second user when entering business metrics.

46. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to link a metric target with a data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template.

47. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to create at least one field category and an order for displaying the at least one field category on the customized ~~created~~ template.

48. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to change a data field displayed on the customized created template, and wherein the level indicates higher or lower desirable features or ratings.

49. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to modify a definition assigned to a data field displayed on the customized created template.

50. (currently amended) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to prompt the first user to modify the customized created template by changing an order of appearance of the data fields displayed on the customized created template.

51. (previously presented) The system according to Claim 40 wherein said server system further configured to change the at least one hierarchy of entities within the business entity by prompting the first user to add or remove at least one business unit from the at least one hierarchy of entities.

52. (currently amended) Apparatus for managing business metrics for a business entity, the business entity having a plurality of business units, said apparatus comprising:

a database for storing information and a plurality of web pages; and

a computer coupled to the database, said computer programmed to:

store in the database a plurality of web pages including a create template web page;

prompt a first user to create a customized template for receiving business metrics by displaying the create template web page, the create template web page prompts the first user to enter data including at least one of a template name, a frequency, a first due date, a contact name, and a template description, the create template web page prompts the first user to define designate a number of data fields to be displayed on the customized created template and a type of business metrics to be entered into the customized created template, the customized created template is stored within the database for retrieval by a second user for inputting business metrics;

prompt the first user to link at least one of a level and a weight to a data field displayed on the customized template;

record at least one hierarchy of entities within the business entity including storing within the database a relationship between each of the business units included within the business entity;

link the customized ~~created~~ template to the at least one hierarchy of entities for restricting access to the customized ~~created~~ template to only selected business units included within the business entity;

link the ~~selected~~ data fields included within the customized ~~created~~ template to the at least one hierarchy of entities for combining data for a plurality of selected business units included within the business entity;

display the customized ~~created~~ template to prompt the second user to enter business metrics relating a business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template, the second user enters business metrics into the data fields displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template;

store the business metrics in the database;

analyze the business metrics stored in the database for generating reports including the business metrics; and

generate a plurality of reports including a first report showing business metrics for each business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template including each business unit having entered data and the hierarchical relationship between each business unit, and a second report containing desired combinations of combining ~~combining~~ business metrics entered into linked data fields for each business unit linked to the customized ~~created~~ template based on the hierarchy of entities.

53. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to create a calculation formula data field displayed

on the customized ~~created~~ template, the calculation formula data field showing a formula used for calculating data displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template.

54. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to:

perform at least one mathematical computation using the business metrics stored in the database, the computations performed include at least one of summing, averaging, time weight averaging; and

generate a trend analysis based on the business metrics stored within the database by prompting a user to select the business units to be included within the trend analysis and a type of measure to be analyzed.

55. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to assign a definition to each data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template.

56. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to create a data field for validating a business metric entered into the customized ~~created~~ template.

57. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to create a drop-down box for entering a business metric into the customized ~~created~~ template, the drop-down box having a plurality of data selection created by the first user to be selected by the second user when entering business metrics.

58. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to link a metric target with a data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template.

59. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to create at least one field category and an order for displaying the at least one field category on the customized ~~created~~ template.

60. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to change a data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template, and wherein the level indicates higher or lower desirable features or ratings.

61. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to modify a definition assigned to a data field displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template.

62. (currently amended) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to prompt the first user to modify the customized ~~created~~ template by changing an order of appearance of the data fields displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template.

63. (previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 52 wherein said computer is further programmed to change the at least one hierarchy of entities within the business entity by prompting the first user to add or remove at least one business unit from the at least one hierarchy of entities.

64. (currently amended) A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for managing business metrics for a business entity, the business entity having a plurality of business units, said program comprising at least one code segment that stores in a database a plurality of web pages including a create template web page, said computer program being comprised of instructions, which when read and executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform the following steps and then:

prompts a first user to create a customized template for receiving business metrics by displaying the create template web page on a computer, the create template web page prompts the first user to enter data including at least one of a template name, a frequency, a first due date, a contact name, and a template description, the create template web page prompts the first user to define ~~designate a number of~~ data fields to be displayed on the customized ~~created~~ template and

a type of business metrics to be entered into the customized created template, the created template is stored within the database for retrieval by a second user for inputting business metrics;

prompts the first user to link at least one of a level and a weight to a data field displayed on the customized template, wherein the level indicates higher or lower desirable features or ratings;

records at least one hierarchy of entities within the business entity including storing within the database a relationship between each of the business units included within the business entity;

links the customized created template to the at least one hierarchy of entities for restricting access to the customized created template to only selected business units included within the business entity;

links the selected data fields created in included within the customized-created template to the at least one hierarchy of entities for combining data for a plurality of ~~selected~~ business units included within the business entity;

displays the created template on the computer to prompt the second user to enter business metrics relating a business unit linked to the created template, the second user enters business metrics into the data fields displayed on the created template;

stores the business metrics in the database;

analyzes the business metrics stored in the database for generating reports including the business metrics; and

generates a plurality of reports including a first report showing business metrics for each business unit linked to the created template including each business unit having entered data and the hierarchical relationship between each business unit, and a second report combining business metrics entered into linked data fields for each business unit linked to the created template based on the hierarchy of entities.